

Written Testimony: Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Public Hearing March 9, 2023

Dear Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro, and I have the privilege and honor of representing Connecticut's Third Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. I am writing in support of H.B.6859, An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling. This legislation would ensure that the hundreds of thousands of low-wage, hourly Connecticut workers, many earning poverty wages, have access to a stable job that respects them and their families and gives them a path to opportunity.

I am the daughter of a garment worker, so the fight for workers' rights has always had a special place in my heart too. My mother toiled every day in the sweatshops in New Haven, Connecticut – sewing shirt collars and piece work for pennies a piece. And now, every day, I work to ensure that her early struggles were not in vain.

These last three years have been difficult for so many – particularly for working families. Far too many people lost their jobs. Small businesses and restaurants were forced to close. Schools were shut down. Our childcare infrastructure collapsed. And the pandemic exacerbated what we have known for a long time – that pay has not kept up with this cost-of-living crisis. Too many Americans were already struggling, and the pandemic took a massive toll that left so many reeling. Workers are living paycheck to paycheck – struggling to pay taxes that are too high. Big corporations with monopoly profits are using inflation to push up prices, while big oil companies are price gouging at the pump. Hard work should be rewarded – and that means providing tax relief for working people and raising taxes on billionaires to ensure they are paying their fair share. That is how we can begin growing the middle class again.

I have long believed that all workers and their families deserve stability and security – not schedules left to the needs of their employer alone. Workers in vital service sector jobs are not only underpaid, but often subjected to unfair practices like little notice of their work schedule and last-minute shift changes and cancellations. Employers have continued to use these “just-in-time” scheduling practices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic—even as workers faced heightened risks to their health and safety, inadequate access to paid leave and paid sick days, and ongoing caregiving challenges from school and child care disruptions.

Volatile job schedules undermine workers' efforts to make ends meet and care for their families—especially for women and particularly women of color, who are often both the primary breadwinner and caregiver for their families. Research shows that low wages and other working conditions that increase parents' stress—including unstable and unpredictable work hours—can undermine children's well-being. At the same time, these scheduling practices make it hard for

families to afford and access high-quality child care. Volatile work hours also produce volatile incomes – making it difficult for working families to budget for expenses and increasing their exposure to economic hardship, including hunger and housing insecurity.

That is why, similar to the predictable schedules bill, I am the author of the Schedules that Work Act at the federal level, which would address unstable, unpredictable, and rigid scheduling practices like placing workers “on-call” with no guarantee of work hours, scheduling them for “split shifts” of non-consecutive hours, sending workers home early without pay when demand is low, and punishing workers who request schedule changes.

It is time for businesses to put an end to unfair practices that deprive workers of vital income, force workers to struggle to balance the demands of work and home, lead to higher employee turnover – and a reduction in worker health and wellbeing. I urge businesses to listen to workers’ voices and encourage their input. Unpredictability for workers who are left with unmanageable, and sometimes inhumane, shifts is unacceptable. This is a time for change.

In closing, I urge you to support H.B.6859, An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling. This is a real solution to improving the lives of Connecticut workers, and this critical legislation would have a transformative impact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rosa L. DeLauro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rosa" being more prominent and the last name "DeLauro" following in a similar style.

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress